

C A M P A I G N F O R ACCOUNTABILITY

September 11, 2017

By Email: publicinformation@sao.texas.gov

Office of General Counsel
Texas State Auditor's Office
P.O. Box 12067
Austin, TX 78711-2067

Re: Public Information Act Request

Dear Sir or Madam:

Campaign for Accountability (“CfA”) makes this request for records, regardless of format, medium, or physical characteristics, and including electronic records and information, audiotapes, videotapes and photographs, pursuant to the Texas Public Information Act. TX Gov’t Code §§ 552.001 *et seq.*

Specifically, CfA seeks any records or communications regarding an audit of the Heidi Group, or the Women’s Wellness Coalition, for contract No. 529-16-0132-00006. This request includes the audit itself as well as notifications or any communications related to the audit. This request is for records from January 1, 2016 to the present.

Additionally, CfA seeks records for any previous audits submitted by the Heidi Group or the Women’s’ Wellness Coalition since January 1, 2012.

By way of background, in August 2016, HHSC awarded the Heidi Group \$1.6 million through its Healthy Texas Women (“HTW”) program to provide health care and family planning services.¹ On March 14, 2017, the *Associated Press* reported the Heidi Group had also received a separate \$5.1 million family planning contract.² The HTW contract between HHSC and the Heidi Group states that the grantee must have an audit conducted and submitted to HHSC.³ On September 11, 2017, Robert Patterson, Open Records Coordinator at HHSC, informed CfA that the Heidi Group’s audits are held by the State Auditor’s Office.⁴

¹ *Id.*

² Paul Weber, *Get by without Planned Parenthood? One Texas effort stumbles*, *Associated Press*, March 14, 2017, available at <http://www.chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/health/sns-bc-us--womens-health-texas-20170317-story.html>.

³ Signature Document for The Health and Human Services Commission, Contract No. 529-16-0132-00006, Health Texas Women’s Grant Program, July 15, 2016, at 88, available at <https://www.scribd.com/document/323185252/The-Heidi-Group-Healthy-Texas-Women-contract>.

⁴ Email from Robert Patterson, HHSC Open Records Coordinator, to Daniel Stevens, Executive Director of Campaign for Accountability, September 11, 2017, attached as Exhibit A.

Where possible, please produce records electronically. CfA seeks records of any kind, including electronic records, audiotapes, videotapes, and photographs. This request includes any letters, emails, facsimiles, telephone messages, voice mail messages, and transcripts, notes, or minutes of any meetings, telephone conversations, or discussions. This request also includes any attachments to these records.

If it is your position that any portion of the requested records is exempt from disclosure, please state the basis of the exemption. TX Gov't Code § 552.101. Please explain in writing and with particularity the reasons for any determination that a record is exempt from disclosure. In the event that a portion of a requested record is properly exempt from disclosure, please redact that portion and produce the remainder of the requested record. If you deny this request in whole or in part, please specify each exemption on which you are relying to withhold information.

CfA is a non-profit organization and seeks the requested information to inform and educate the public about the state's oversight responsibilities regarding public funding for private organizations. Accordingly, because CfA seeks the information to benefit the general public, we request that the information be provided without charge. TX Gov't Code § 552.267. If a fee waiver is not available, please inform me if the cost will exceed \$200. TX Gov't Code § 552.2615.

Please promptly produce the requested information. If, however, production cannot occur within 10 business days, please certify that fact to us and provide a time when the information will be available. TX Gov't Code § 552.221. If you are unable to meet this statutorily required time period, or foresee any problems in releasing the requested records in whole or in part, please contact me at 202-780-5750.

Finally, I welcome the opportunity to discuss with you whether and to what extent this request can be narrowed or modified to better the State Auditor's Office to process it.

If possible, please email the records to me at dstevens@campaignforaccountability.org. If the records are mailed, please send them to: Campaign for Accountability, 611 Pennsylvania Ave S.E., #337, Washington, D.C. 20003.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dan E Stevens", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Daniel Stevens
Executive Director

EXHIBIT A

Heidi Group Audits

Patterson,Robert (HHSC) <Robert.Patterson@hhsc.state.tx.us>

Mon 9/11/2017 11:51 AM

Texas

To:Daniel Stevens <dstevens@campaignforaccountability.org>;

Mr. Stevens, staff have informed me that we do not have the Heidi Group audit records.

They say those are held by the State Auditor's Office and that you will have to submit your request to that agency.

I am sorry for the delay in getting this to you.

Robert W. Patterson
HHSC Open Records Coordinator
512-424-6910